



The Straight Scoop

**Department Newsletter of the
Marine Corps League
Department of West Virginia
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COMMANDANT'S MESSAGE

Marines, FMF Corpsmen, FMF Chaplains and Associate Members. I hope this finds you well.

It was a successful year and another successful Convention. On behalf of all the Marines from the Department, I would like to thank the Earl Anderson Detachment 342 for hosting an outstanding convention. Bravo Zulu Marines!

Next up is the Mid-East Division Conference hosted by Detachment 957 in Princeton WV. This is a perfect opportunity for us to showcase our Department, so I would like to see as many Marines in Princeton as possible. You can pre-register with our Department Adjutant Patti Leib or register the day

of the conference. Commandant Al Harmon and his Marines have been working tirelessly to put on a great conference so let's show them our support as we did in Morgantown.

Congratulations to all of the newly elected Detachment and Department Officers. Let us always remember that it is our members who we serve and not the other way around. It is our responsibility to guide our Detachments according to our bylaws and good judgement. Push forward, be impartial and always remember **Together Everyone Achieves More!**

My door is always open but please remember to use your Chain of Command. Give your Officers a chance to answer your questions and help fix anything that might be broken. There are also our Past Department Commandants that are always available to reach out to for questions. I invite all Past Department Commandants to call me anytime to pass on your ideas or concerns.

Please keep all members of our Armed Forces in your thoughts and Prayers as they serve in harm's way.

Semper Fidelis,

Scott Kirby

Commandant
Dept. of WV
Marine Corps League

Chaplain's Corner

Famed General George C. Marshall's early military career included an appointment as a leader at the Infantry School of Fort Benning, GA. When he first arrived, he found Ft. Benning in poor, decrepit condition. However, rather than ordering renovations to the post, he simply began to revamp his own quarters by himself. The cadets noticed the Officer's actions and began doing likewise. In time, the entire premises was revitalized. General Marshall's example, rather than an order, was enough to spur his men to action.

During Israel's wilderness wanderings, Aaron, the High Priest, was to offer sacrifice on behalf of the Hebrews – however, before Aaron offered sacrifice for the people, he was to offer a sacrifice for himself and his family. Doing so served not only to purify Aaron for his duties as High Priest, but also served as an example for the Israelites. Israel's leaders were to be first in recognizing and seeking atonement for their sins, and doing so would undoubtedly motivate the people to do the same.

The best way for Detachment and Department leadership to motivate their members is to be good role models. Leaders who are first to take responsibility first to accept blame, and first to ask forgiveness, can be wonderful testimonies to the people and can influence them to follow suit. But it isn't just leadership – all our members need to take the initiative to help people in need, to forgive people who've wronged us, and to live a life of honor. It's not just kids who are watching, but we are often in the public forefront & people in our community are also watching.

As the old saying goes, "More is caught than taught". Make sure what you "pitch" honors the values of the Marine Corps and the Marine Corps League

Mideast Division Conference in Princeton, WV June 21-23, 2019

Mountaineer Marine Detachment 957 and the Department of WV are hosting the 2019 Mideast Division Conference this year. This is a great opportunity to attend the conference and meet the leaders of your division and make some new friends. It will be five more years until West Virginia hosts the Conference.

HOTEL UPDATES

The conference hotel (the Days Inn in Princeton) is **completely sold out**. Commandant Al Harman (Host Det 957) has secured additional lodging for our members and guests at comparable hotels within sight of the Days Inn. Of the 6 hotels at that intersection of I-77 and US-460, the best rates he was able to secure are the following:

Microtel Inn & Suites by Wyndham

250 Ambrose Lane

Princeton, WV 24740

Ph: (304)402-3856

Ten rooms are guaranteed at \$84 per night

Mention Al Harman to receive this rate

Or

Sleep Inn & Suites

(on the other side of the interstate, behind Lowe's)

1015 Oakvale Road

Princeton, WV 24740

(304)431-2800

12 rooms are guaranteed at \$83 per night; mention Al Harman to receive this rate.

PLEASE NOTE!! These rooms are only being held for a short time, so if you haven't reserved your room yet, you don't have much time to do it.

There is an archery competition the same weekend, so folks, don't wait - reserve your rooms ASAP.

ALSO - if you haven't registered or reserved your banquet tickets, please do that now so our planning will go smoothly. Mail your registration and banquet reservations to me at:

Patti Leib

Adjutant-Paymaster

Department of WV - MCL

PO Box 1224

Athens, OH 45701-1224

Phone: (740)591-8611

pattileib024@gmail.com

Detachment Commandants, Paymasters, Adjutants and Adjutant/Paymasters;

By this time, all Detachments should have held their election of officers for the 2019 - 2020 terms. That also means it is time for you to submit your Report of Officer Installation (ROI) for 2019 - 2020. Remember that you must to send the Original Report of Officer Installation (ROI) to the Department Adjutant-Paymaster every year, even if none of your Officers change. Please try to complete this PRIOR to Convention each year.

Mail them to me at:

Patti Leib, Adjutant-Paymaster Department of West Virginia – MCL

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Annual Corporate Report

Every detachment must be incorporated within the state so after annual officer installations are complete, the Detachment must complete and file a Corporation Annual Report prior to 30 June each year and mail to the WV Secretary of State, Business and Licensing Division. To ensure compliance and to be able to report to the Department in a timely manner, you should hold your elections and report to the Secretary of State prior to the Department Convention each year. Once the form is completed, a copy should be mailed to the Department Adjutant for record purposes. The cost is \$26 and is payable to the WV Secretary of State's office and should be done as soon as you have your elections and the officers installed. The Secretary of State has recently sent an email to all Detachments and Pounds that they must file their ACR on line. They will no longer accept a paper copy. Detachments and Pounds that do not file their annual reports on time are at risk of being administratively dissolved or revoked and will be assessed a mandatory late fee of \$25 (twenty-five dollars) for non-profit organizations as required by West Virginia Code. If Officers are installed or changed after 1 July, the Detachment must file an Application to Appoint or Change Officers, and/or Office Addresses with the WV Secretary of State. There is an additional fee of \$15 to file changes. If you have questions or need assistance, contact the Department Adjutant-Paymaster, Patti Leib, at (740) 591-8611.

Upcoming Paid Life Member Audits – From Patti Leib, Adjutant-Paymaster

National will sending me the Paid Life Member forms sometime in July. I will distribute them to each Detachment for the Commandant and Paymaster to Audit, make notations/corrections, both of them sign and state "This is a true and correct audit of our Paid Life Members", then send the original to me, keeping a copy for your records.

Some people advise that you use your most recent Roster to Audit your PLMs, but the Roster is missing vital information pertinent to life members only.

There are 2 very easy ways to determine if a document is a Roster or a PLM Audit;

- 1) the PLM Audit has a column with a True/False statement after each name listed, and
- 2) the PLM Audit prints in landscape while the Roster prints in portrait

I'll send specific instructions to each Detachment Commandant & Paymaster with the Paid Life Member Audit so you'll know exactly what to do to process it correctly. And I encourage people to send it back to me in US Mail ASAP for a couple of reasons; 1) do it right away so it doesn't slip off your radar and not get done in time, and 2) there's always a possibility a member may pass away later in the year after we've submitted the Audits to National, but since the Audit was already completed, additional changes won't take effect until the next annual reporting period, and 3) it helps to get the Audits back to National early enough for them to enter into their Interest Return program, so they're not swamped with hundreds of Audits and a looming deadline. That slows EVERYTHING down. Remember, I collect all the PLM Audits and send them in as a group. If you delay returning your audit, it affects everyone else. And if you don't make the deadline, you won't receive your interest payment. Be sure to watch for your Detachment's Audit via an email from me in July, and please call me if you have questions or need assistance.

Thank you

IRS 990N Postcard

July is also the month that most all Detachments must file their IRS990N online with the IRS. This is a really simple process but very important that everyone comply. I'll send out instructions with the July Newsletter, but please be sure to put this on your calendar so your Detachment Adjutant-Paymaster will remember to do it after July 1st. Once the IRS990N is completed & submitted, please forward a copy to pattileib024@gmail.com

Military Records/DD-214 "Emergency" Requests and Deadlines

If your request is urgent (for example, upcoming surgery, a funeral, etc.) tell NDAA the nature of the emergency and your deadline in the "Comments" section of eVetRecs (<https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records.gov>) or in the "Purpose" section of the Standard Form (SF) 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records. Fax your request to NDAA's Customer Service Team at (314) 801-0764. Call NDAA's customer service staff at (314) 801-0800 if you have questions or require same-day service. Due to the large number of calls received at this number, hold times are often long. However, once you reach a technician, he or she will be happy to assist you with emergency service.

If your burial request involves interment at a Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery, contact the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at (800) 535-1117 or visit the National Cemetery Administration website https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial_benefits. We work directly with the Veterans Affairs staff to obtain records to verify service for burial benefits. If the veteran is not going to be interred at a National Cemetery, the requester may fax the SF-180 or signature page from eVetRecs (including signature of the next of kin and proof of death) to the Customer Service Team at (314) 801-0764

GI Bill Disabled Vet Student Loan Forgiveness

Attorneys general from 47 U.S. states on 24 MAY called on Education Secretary Betsy DeVos to forgive more than \$1 billion of student loans burdening more than 42,000 veterans who became permanently disabled through their military service. Led by New Jersey Democrat Gurbir Grewal and Utah Republican Sean Reyes, the attorneys general said in a 24 MAY letter that they welcomed federal efforts to make loan discharges easier to obtain, but said the Department of Education should develop an automatic process to forgive loans rather than require veterans to apply for loan discharges.

They said fewer than 9,000 eligible veterans had applied for loan discharges as of April 2018, and more than 25,000 veterans were in default. "The current approach is inadequate," the letter said. "The cost of education for our disabled veterans today is soaring, and it would be of great benefit to those who are burdened by these crushing debts to obtain relief without arduous compliance requirements." Attorneys general for the District of Columbia and three U.S. territories also signed the letter.

In a statement, the Department of Education said it recognized the sacrifices that veterans make for their country and did not want to cause "unintended consequences" for them. But the department said it was important for veterans to be fully informed before making decisions about their loans, including whether discharges might boost their tax bills or make it harder to borrow for education later. "While 'automatic discharge' may seem like a simple solution, there are long-term impacts we want all veterans to have the chance to consider before their loans are discharged," the department said.

The attorneys general, in their letter to DeVos, addressed the tax issue, saying federal and most state tax laws exclude loan discharges for disabled borrowers from taxable income. In 2008, President George W. Bush signed a law deeming veterans who are "permanently and totally disabled" eligible for loan discharges when the Department of Veterans Affairs decides they have become "unemployable" because of service-related conditions. Friday's letter said loan forgiveness for disabled veterans has bipartisan support in Congress and among veterans' groups. The letter was sent three days before the Memorial Day holiday honoring members of the military. "We now urge the department to take action to better protect those who once protected the nation," the letter said. "Our veterans deserve nothing less."

VA Appeals Status Tracker How to check the Status of Your Claim

Knowing what stage of the appeals process your claim is in can help you avoid missing deadlines and better understand how the VA claims and appeals process works. Generally, there are eight steps that disability claims follow:

- 1) Claim Received. Your claim is moved to this stage once it has been received by VA.
- 2) Under Review. A Veterans Service Representative is reviewing your claim to determine if there is a need for additional evidence. This includes the results of your Compensation and Pension Exam, which VA will schedule.
- 3) Gathering of Evidence. If the Veterans Service Representative deems that your claim requires additional evidence, he or she will request it from the appropriate sources.
- 4) Review of Evidence. All evidence is received and is under review.
- 5) Preparation for Decision. At this stage, the Veterans Service Representative has recommended a decision and is preparing documents detailing that decision.
- 6) Pending Decision Approval. The Veterans Service Representative's decision is reviewed, and a decision is made.
- 6) Preparation for Notification. Your decision is being prepared for mailing.
- 7) Complete. The award or decision is sent to you via U.S. mail, along with the details surrounding this decision.

VA allows veterans to track the progress of their claims throughout the claim stream in three ways:

- By visiting a local VA regional office;
- By calling VA's national toll-free phone number at 800-827-1000;
- Or by logging into gov and using VA's appeals tracker.

Online VA Appeals Status Tool VA has created its online appeal status tracker in an attempt to improve transparency and allow veterans easier access to their appeal's status. VA describes this tool as easy to use and provides accessible information to veterans. To use this tool, veterans can sign into vets.gov using: o DS Logon, which is the same log on as your eBenefits account; o My HealtheVet account; o ID me account.

If you do not yet have a login, create an ID me account at <https://api.id.me/en/registration/new>. Once you are logged in, select the "Check your claim and appeal status" option to access the appeals tracker tool. The main page entitled "Your Compensation Appeals and Claims" will show the type of claim that is under appeal (e.g. Appeal of Compensation Decision), the date you received the claim decision, the appeal's status (e.g. a Decision Review Officer is reviewing your appeal), the issues on appeal (e.g. increased rating), and a "View Status" option that will lead you to detailed information about your appeal.

On the "View Status" page, veterans can view the current status of their appeal followed by a description of what happens during the next step of the process (e.g. The Board will make a decision). On this screen, you may also select "See past events" which displays a time line of events that have already occurred throughout your appeal process. Below this time line, you will see the "Current Status" of your appeal. If your appeal stage requires action, an alert box will be highlighted in yellow under this portion of the web page. This section will describe what action must be taken in order to continue on with your appeal and the date by which it must be completed. For example, if a veteran recently received a Statement of the Case, this section will instruct the veteran to submit a VA Form 9 within 60 days of receiving it and provide the deadline.

The "What happens next?" feature will display a projected wait time for reaching the next step in the appeal process. Using the same example as mentioned above, the "What happens next?" section will show an estimate of when your case will be transferred to The Board if you do not submit new evidence with your VA Form 9. In this case, a time line of two events will be provided because veterans are able to submit new evidence in support of their claim at this stage. If you did submit new evidence, you will subsequently receive another Statement of the Case, called a Supplemental Statement of the Case, and a new projected time frame.

Once your appeal has been certified to the Board, you will be able to see a progress bar beneath "What happens next?" showing where your appeal is on the Board's docket. This progress bar shows the total number of appeals on the docket, and the number of appeals ahead of you. Although you are able to see the progress of your docket number, no time estimate is provided here as the Board is not required to adhere to any deadlines.

At the top of the page, there is a tab entitled "Issues" where you are able to see what issues are currently on appeal and previous issues that have been closed whether they were granted, denied, or withdrawn. If you need assistance during any point of the appeal process, do not hesitate to contact a VA-accredited claims agent, Veteran Service Organization, or VA-accredited attorney.

VA Disability Review Frequently Requested to Check Severity of Disabilities

A thorough review of disability examinations is often requested by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to check on the severity of a previously rated service-connected disability. VA staff use review exams, and any other relevant evidence, to assess the current severity of a disability and, if possible, reduce the initial rating assigned. VA regulations point out specific time lines for “examination checks,” but, it is not a hard and fast rule, and, oftentimes, ignored by VA personnel. But, rest assured, it will happen at some point. By law, VA should and will request a review exam under the following circumstances:

- VA needs to assess the severity of a disability;
- Additional or more relevant evidence indicates there has been an important and significant (or material) change in a disability; or
- Because of law, VA personnel are required to conduct a periodic review.

The Examination Process Oftentimes, a contracted medical professional or VA medical professional will conduct the disability review exam. The medical examiners and staff will not answer specific questions about benefits, pension program or compensation. Nor, will they consult with a veteran about the disability compensation process. Acting as a stoic conduit within strict bureaucratic protocol, the medical examiners methodically go through a set of procedures to assess disability conditions. Typically, the examination is conducted in a medically approved facility, with the veteran and medical staff member. In very rare cases, VA personnel may decide that an examination by telephone would be the most appropriate route.

The medical examiner will often conduct the following procedures:

- Ask a Veteran questions related to the disability in question;
- Perform a physical exam related to the disability;
- If multiple disability conditions are to be examined the medical examiner will conduct one examine at-a-time;
- Send the veteran for lab work, which may include: blood work, X-rays, MRI, etc.;
- While conducting exam, the medical examiner will pay very close attention to how the veteran reacts to certain procedures;
- At the conclusion of the exam, sometimes the medical examiner is required to go over the veterans medical file with him/her;
- In some instances, if the veteran is accompanied by someone familiar with the disability the veteran is having examined, the medical examiner may ask that person questions related to the disability being examined.

It is important to understand that the medical examiner is not involved in making a rating decision about the disability. The medical examiners’ job is simply to conduct the examination based upon certain set of criteria established by VA. However, the words the examiner uses in describing the examination review, may ultimately affect the thinking of the VA rater and how a disability is to be perceived. The medical examiner may select words and sentence structures that may be perceived in a way that a reduction in compensation benefits is necessary, or that an increase is appropriate or no change at all is necessary.

Based on a thorough review of the disability examined, VA raters may issue a new or updated medical decision and contact the veteran by mail. After the decision has been made, VA will do 1 of 3 possible outcomes:

- * The veteran’s disability rating will remain unchanged;
- * It was concluded that the disability has worsened and an increase in compensation benefits may be approved.
- * If not approved for an increase it will be annotated in a veteran’s disability file that an increase was not warranted, but the worsening of the disability condition has been recorded and recognized;
- * The disability has improved significantly enough that a reduction in compensation benefits may be appropriate at this time.

If a veteran misses a review exam, it may negatively affect the outcome of any potential increase in compensation benefits. The veteran should always call their VA Regional Office (VARO) to reschedule their

appointment as soon as reasonably possible once they realize they won't make it to the scheduled review exam. Harsh, but true, if a veteran misses an exam without details as to why, VA may be required by law to propose an immediate reduction in the disability that was to be examined or an immediate termination of compensation benefits for that specific disability.

It's very important that a veteran review exam results as soon as possible. All too often, what is written by the medical examiner differs quite a bit from what the veteran witnessed. For instance, some veterans have reported that the medical examiner indicated that a certain instrument was used during the exam, and the veteran was sure no such instrument was ever used. Checking the accuracy of the medical exam is crucial. Some veterans use the Post Examination Assessment Form immediately after medical examinations conducted by VA medical staff. In doing so, the veteran has an opportunity to record exam results as he/she remembers them, and the form provides a structured format the way VA personnel like to work with.

Lastly, it is vital to the outcome of any medical examination conducted by VA personnel that the veteran comb over all details of correspondence sent to them related to the medical examination. Addressing any and all issues related to the medical examination is a must. If VA is asking for information, it is very important that a veteran respond to the question as soon as humanly possible. Some veterans may require the help of a certified VSO in interpreting information sent to them by VA personnel. Understanding what a veteran receives from VA is of utmost importance.

VA Individual Unemployability What It Is in plain, understandable English.

Unfortunately, many veterans are too often confused about Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) 100 percent disability ratings and whether or not they are allowed to secure gainful employment if rated at 100 percent. While complex, and sometimes confusing to the most experienced VSO, let's take a look at the four types of 100 percent disability ratings in plain, understandable English.

1. Combined. When a veteran's service-connected disabilities are combined to reach 100 percent, he/she is allowed to work full time or part time. For example, if a veteran is rated 70% for PTSD, and 30% for IBS, the two disabilities equal 100% (sometimes – see rating table), and the veteran is allowed to hold a full time or part time job.

2. TDIU or IU. Total Disability/Individual Unemployability. This is a specific type of claim made by a veteran, requesting that he/she be paid at the 100 percent rate even though his/her disabilities do not combine to reach 100%. The request is often made because the veteran is unable to maintain "gainful employment" because his/her service-connected disabilities prevent him/her from doing so. The basic eligibility to file for Individual Unemployability (IU) is that the veteran has one disability rated at 60 percent or one at 40 percent and enough other disabilities that result in a combined rating of 70 percent or more. The one disability at 40 percent criteria can be a combined rating of related disabilities.

Meeting the basic criteria is not a guarantee that the veteran will be awarded 100 percent under IU criteria. The medical evidence must show that the veteran is unable to work in both a physical and sedentary job setting. A veteran not meeting the percentage criteria may still be awarded IU if the disabilities present a unique barrier to gainful employment. If a veteran is granted 100 percent under IU he is prohibited from working full-time, because in filing the claim for IU the veteran is stating he/she is unable to work because of his/her service-connected disabilities. However, receiving IU does not necessarily prevent a veteran from all employment circumstances. The veteran can work in a part-time "marginal" employment position and earn up to a certain amount annually, but not allowed to surpass a certain amount.

3. Temporary 100 percent rating. If a veteran is hospitalized 21 days or longer or had surgery for a service-connected disability that requires at least a 30-day convalescence period, the VA will pay at the 100 percent rate for the duration of the hospital stay or the convalescence period. For example, if a veteran has a total hip replacement for a service-connected hip disability, the VA will pay 100 percent compensation for up to 13 months, the standard recovery period for a replacement of a major joint. The duration of 100 percent temporary disability for any other type of surgery will depend on what the doctor reports as the recovery period.

4. Permanent and total. A 100 percent "permanent and total" rating is when the VA acknowledges that the service-connected conditions have no likelihood of improvement and the veteran will remain at 100 percent permanently with no future examinations. The P&T rating provides additional benefits, such as Chapter 35 education benefits for dependents, among others. Veterans sometimes make the mistake of requesting a P&T rating simply because they want education benefits for their dependents. The one caveat that veterans need to keep in mind is that when P&T is requested, all of their service-connected disabilities will be re-evaluated. If improvement is noted during the subsequent examinations, a reduction from 100 percent can possibly be proposed.

Because many veterans are service-connected for conditions that VA says have a "likelihood of improvement," most ratings are not considered permanent and are subject to future review. The only time veterans can't work a full-time position, that is considered a gainfully-employed job is if they were awarded 100 percent disability through a claim for IU. Additionally, a 100 percent rating under either IU or combined ratings may or may not be rated as permanent and total. A temporary 100 percent rating is just that: temporary due to being hospitalized or recovering from surgery on a service-connected condition.

If a veteran is approved by the VA for IU, not only do they receive the 100-percent service-disabled rate of pay but they may also receive additional benefits including health insurance for their dependents, Property Tax Credit, a service-disabled military ID card and a \$10,000 life insurance policy with a waiver on monthly premiums. To apply for IU download Veteran's Application for Increased Compensation Based on Unemployability form VA Form 218940. Complete the form, and mail it to Department of Veterans Affairs, Evidence Intake Center, PO Box 4444, Janesville, WI. 53547. Veterans may fax form to 1-844-531-7818. Keep in mind, it is always best for a veteran to work with an accredited Veteran Service Officer (VSO) who can explain the complex workings of the VA benefit system.

VA Community Care New Eligibility Criteria Under Mission Act

VA recently proposed new rules for Veteran community care that include six new eligibility criteria for Veterans under the VA MISSION Act, which was signed into law by President Trump in June 2018. The new eligibility criteria will be a major improvement over existing criteria in terms of making things simpler: currently, eligibility criteria vary between VA's community care programs. When the new criteria go into effect, Veterans can expect better access and greater choice in their health care, whether at VA or through a community provider. The eligibility criteria are projected to go into effect in June 2019 after final regulations are published and effective, so the criteria are not yet final. In addition, key aspects of community care eligibility include the following:

- Veterans must receive approval from VA prior to obtaining care from a community provider in most circumstances.
- Veterans must either be enrolled in VA health care or be eligible for VA care without needing to enroll to be eligible for community care.
- Eligibility for community care will continue to be dependent upon a Veteran's individual health care needs or circumstances.
- VA staff members generally make all eligibility determinations.
- Veterans will usually have the option to receive care at a VA medical facility, regardless of their eligibility for community care.

- Meeting any one of the six eligibility criteria is sufficient to be referred to a community provider—a Veteran does not have to meet all of them to be eligible. (real-world examples of when a Veteran would be eligible for community care are included in the eligibility fact sheet linked at the end of the article).

Eligibility Criteria

1. Veteran Needs a Service Not Available at a VA Medical Facility -- In this situation, a Veteran needs a specific type of care or service that VA does not provide in-house at any of its medical facilities.
2. Veteran Lives in a U.S. State or Territory Without a Full-Service VA Medical Facility -- In this scenario, a Veteran lives in a U.S. State or territory that does not have a full-service VA medical facility. Specifically, this would apply to Veterans living in Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire, and the U.S. territories of Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
3. Veteran Qualifies under the “Grandfather” Provision Related to Distance Eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program -- For this element, there are a few different ways that a Veteran could be eligible for community care. Initially, the following two requirements must be met in every case: ☐ Veteran was eligible under the 40-mile criterion under the Veterans Choice Program on the day before the VA MISSION Act was enacted into law (June 6, 2018), and ☐ Veteran continues to reside in a location that would qualify them under that criterion.
4. If both of these requirements have been met, a Veteran may be eligible if one of the following is also true: o Veteran lives in one of the five States with the lowest population density from the 2010 Census: North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Alaska, and Wyoming, or o Veteran lives in another State, received care between June 6, 2017, and June 6, 2018, and requires care before June 6, 2020.
5. VA Cannot Furnish Care within Certain Designated Access Standards -- To be eligible under this criterion, VA would have to be unable to schedule a VA appointment for a Veteran at a facility within a specific average drive time to a VA medical facility and within a certain number of days (wait-time). If VA could not schedule an appointment that is within both the average driving time standards and the wait-time standard, then the Veteran would be eligible for community care. The specific access standards are described below. (Important: Access standards are proposed and not yet final).
 - ☐ Average drive time to a specific VA medical facility.
 - ☐ 30-minute average drive time for primary care, mental health, and non-institutional extended care services (including adult day health care).
 - ☐ 60-minute average drive time for specialty care
 - ☐ Appointment wait time at a specific VA medical facility 20 days for primary care, mental health care, and non-institutional extended care services, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with their VA health care provider.
 - ☐ 28 days for specialty care from the date of request, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with their VA health care provider
5. It is in the Veteran’s Best Medical Interest -- In this situation, a Veteran may be referred to a community provider when the Veteran and the referring clinician agree that it is in their best medical interest to see a community provider.
6. A VA Medical Service Line Does Not Meet Certain Quality Standards -- In this scenario, if VA has identified a medical service line is not meeting VA’s standards for quality based on specific conditions, Veterans can elect to receive care from a community provider with certain limitations.

Going Forward What is described above should be taken as a preview of what the final eligibility criteria may be, because it is not yet final. The new criteria are expected to go into effect in June 2019, after final regulations are published and effective.

Marine Corps Hymn - Stand at Attention, Face the Music and ‘SING’ The Words

Marines better make sure they remember all the words to the Marines’ Hymn. As of 15 APR, the top Marine wants them to sing it out loud when it’s played, according to Marine officials. That’s one of a slew of changes coming to the Corps’ new drill and ceremonies manual, which is expected to be published around on that date said Training and Education Command Sgt. Maj. William J. Grigsby told Marine Corps Times in an interview. “It is now directed that Marines, present and who have served honorably, who are not in formation or part of an actual ceremony, or marching in a parade or review, who when they hear the playing of the Marines Hymn will stand at attention, face the music and sing the words to the Hymn,” the updated drill and ceremonies manual reads. Previously Marines were directed to stand at attention during the playing of the Corps’ official song, the Marines’ Hymn — a tradition that dates back to just after World War II.

VA’s improvements to Veteran community care under MISSION Act on track for June 6 implementation in WASHINGTON — As the one-year anniversary of President Trump’s signing of the VA

Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks

(MISSION) Act of 2018 approaches on June 6, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is making significant strides in implementing major improvements to community care for Veterans.

“The Veteran is at the center of everything we do,” VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said. “Through the MISSION Act, Veterans will have more choices than ever in getting timely, high-quality care. Most important, Veterans will be able to decide what is important and best for them.”

The MISSION Act will strengthen VA’s health care system by improving both aspects of care delivery and empowering Veterans to find the balance in the system that is right for them,

A key aspect of the MISSION Act is the consolidation of VA’s community care programs, which will make community care work better for Veterans and their families, providers and VA employees. When this transition is complete, the following will occur:

- ☐ Veterans will have more options for community care.
- ☐ Eligibility criteria for community care will be expanded, including new access standards.
- ☐ Scheduling appointments will be easier, and care coordination between VA and community providers will be better.
- ☐ Eligible Veterans will have access to a network of walk-in and urgent care facilities for minor injuries and illnesses.

“Transitioning to the new eligibility criteria for community care should be seamless for Veterans,” Wilkie said. “Veterans will continue to talk to their care team or scheduler as they have been doing to get the care they need.”

VA also has been working closely with community providers to ensure Veterans have a positive experience when receiving community care. For example, VA has developed education and training materials to help community providers understand some of the unique challenges Veterans can face.

Going forward, community care will be easier to use, and Veterans will remain at the center of their VA health care decisions.

In addition to information VA has made available digitally, Veterans enrolled in VA health care can expect to receive a letter in the mail providing details on where to go for more information.

For more information about community care under the MISSION Act, visit
<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/58621/new-eligibility-criteria-a-major-improvement-over-existing-rules/>

Pending Calendar

2020 Department of West Virginia Department Convention will be May 15-17, 2020 at the Holiday Inn Express, 50 Martin Street, Elkins, WV 26241 hosted by Leland D. "Crow" Crawford Detachment #956. Room rate \$100.00 plus room tax. Phone: 304-630-2266. Reservations can be made now and mention code: MCL or Marine Corps League and give dates. Hotel registration deadline is April 29, 2020. Free parking and continental breakfast 6 -10 a.m. Banquet \$30 and will be buffet style. POC is Roger Ware 304-636-4365 or rrware@yahoo.com. **Please do not call the hotel yet to make reservations as we are still working on the tax exempt and may have to reserve the rooms via our detachment. This will be announcement when it's final.**

2019 Mideast Division Conference will be June 21-23, 2019 hosted by Mountaineer Marine Detachment 957 and the Department of WV at the Days Inn, 347 Meadow Field Lane, Princeton, WV, 24739, Telephone: 304-425-8100. Room rate \$75.60 with tax. Includes free breakfast, parking, Wi-Fi. Reservation start January 7, 2019. Code: 2019 Mideast Division Conference. Reserve by June 7. Banquet \$30.00. Banquet speaker: Woody Williams, Medal of Honor recipient – Iwo Jima. POC: Al Harman 304-921-2165

2019 MCL National Convention will be August 4-10, 2019 hosted by Eugene Sara Detachment 418 at the Billings Hotel & Convention Center, Billings, Montana. Telephone: 1-406-248-7151. Room rate: \$99.50 plus tax. **Reservation open on Monday August 20, 2018 at 10 AM EST.** Free breakfast, parking and Wi-Fi. Link: www.mclnationalconvention2019

2019 Department of WV Fall Quarterly Meeting - September 14, 2019 hosted by Danny M. Greene Detachment 577 in Logan, WV at the old Henlawson Grade School & Vet Center. Dept Staff Officer Meeting is 9:30 AM with general business meeting at 10 AM. WV Pack Growl will immediately follow Dept Meeting.

2019 Modern Day Marine Expo will be Sept 17-19, 2019 at MCB, Quantico, VA

2020 Department of WV Fall Quarterly Meeting will be January 4, 2020 hosted by MGM Detachment 1180 at American Legion Post 23, 100 Second Street Point Pleasant, WV 25550. Staff Officers Meeting is 0930 AM with general business meeting at 1000 AM. WV Pack Growl will immediately follow Dept. Meeting.

2020 MCL Midwinter Staff Conference will be Feb 26 – Mar 1 2020 at the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside - 777 Waterside Dr, Norfolk, VA 23510. group code: MCL Phone: (757-622-6664) Room rate includes up to 4 breakfast vouchers per occupancy. \$129.00 per night + prevailing tax (currently 14%) Please make your room reservation direct to the hotel.

2020 Department of West Virginia Department Convention will be May 15-17, 2020 at the Holiday Inn Express, 50 Martin Street, Elkins, WV 26241 hosted by Leland D. "Crow" Crawford Detachment #956. Room rate \$100.00 plus room tax. Phone: 304-630-2266. Reservations can be made now and mention code: MCL or Marine Corps League and give dates. Hotel registration deadline is April 29, 2020. Free parking and continental breakfast 6 -10 a.m. Banquet \$30 and will be buffet style. POC is Roger Ware 304-636-4365 or rrware@yahoo.com.

2020 MCL National Convention will be August 10-15, 2020 at Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort, 100 North Atlantic Avenue, Daytona Beach, FL, 32118 Phone: 888-217-5507. Room rate: \$145.00 includes tax, Wi-Fi, parking and breakfast. **Reservation open on Monday August 12, 2019 at 10 AM EST.**



Cpl. Walter L. Mann Detachment 1065 and other Marines attended the dedication of the Sandyville Bridge as the USMC PFC Charles Everett Hurd Memorial Bridge. PFC Hurd was killed in action in Phu Bai in Thua, Thien Province, Vietnam. on 3 August 1966. In attendance at the dedication were, left to right, Life Members Dave Shockey and Adrian Ball, Past Detachment Commandant Mike Bright, Marine Tom Perry, Sgt-at-Arms Gary Watkins, Commandant George Gill, Member Earl Poorman and 2019 Detachment Marine of the Year George Roach. A special thanks to American Legion Post 107 and its Commander Bill Stephens for doing all of the paperwork and legwork to get this bridge dedication approved. Thanks! and Semper Fidelis!

Road Dedication to Honor Veteran

Leland D. “Crow” Crawford Detachment 956 of Elkins sponsored a ceremony June 1 at Huttonsville to dedicate a portion of U.S. 250 in memory of a highly decorated World War II veteran from Randolph County. The U.S. Army SSGT Boggs G. Collins Memorial Road was dedicated to Collins, whose courageous performance during World War II reflected the highest traditions of the United States Army as he was cited for extraordinary heroism with the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart with two clusters, French Citation, Combat Infantryman Badge, and American and European Theatre Ribbons with five Battle Stars. The Humbert of Savoy, Prince of Piedmont, Lieutenant General of the Realm of Italy awarded the Military Valor Cross to Collins for his valor during the Italian campaign.

Commandant Roger Ware, below, gives historic background on Collins' valor during the opening ceremony with members of the Collins family, family friends and Detachment members.



Delegate William Hartman of the WV Legislature, top photo, right presents SSGT Boggs Collins' daughter, Sheila McCauley, a copy of the resolution passed by the State Legislature to permit the portion of U.S. 250 to be named for her father.





Detachment 956 Commandant Roger Ware and Department of WV Sergeant-at-Arms Greg Irwin stand near one of two highway signs commemorating the U.S. Army SSG Boggs G. Collins Memorial Road.

2020 MCL Mid-Winter Conference February 27 – March 1, 2020

Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel

777 Waterside Drive Norfolk, VA 23510

(757) 622-6664

Fact Sheet

Room Rate: \$129 + tax

Tax Rate: \$14%

Resort Charge: \$3.00

☐ Parking: Complimentary Self-Parking if staying at hotel, otherwise its \$13 per day. Valet Parking is \$26 per day

Breakfast: Complimentary 2 per room daily

Internet: Complimentary High Speed

Banquet Dinner: \$50 max inclusive

Reservations made by calling the hotel or 1-800-325-3535 and mentioning the Marine Corps League Mid-Winter Conference

All reservations will be charged one-night room and tax deposit at time of confirming reservation. This deposit will be applied toward your final bill. If you cancel within the cancellation period, the deposit will be refunded

Cancellation period is from time of making reservation until February 10, 2020. Any cancellations after February 10, 2020 will forfeit the one-night deposit Marriott

Reward points can be earned with the group rate

This is a smoke free hotel, any smoking in non-smoking rooms will incur a \$200 cleaning fee.

Each room has a mini refrigerator

On site restaurant next door to the Waterside District featuring restaurants and bars.

3 blocks from downtown mall

6 to 11 miles, depending on route, from Norfolk International Airport shuttle service will be arranged at a later date, stay tuned